

## **The reality of culture in the development of a national special education training initiative<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The New Zealand Government is supporting a major new initiative in special education through the creation of a nationwide network of 750 Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) whose role is to provide specialist mainstreamed services through direct support of teachers working with students who have moderate learning and behaviour difficulties. This paper introduces and discusses the national professional developmental programme for Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB).

### **Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the national professional developmental programme for Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB). Particular emphasis is placed on the bicultural strand of the programme, which aims to develop RTLB understanding of the impact of culture on learning and behaviour, improve recognition and responsiveness to *Treaty of Waitangi* issues, and support the development of culturally appropriate practices for Māori students and whanau. Also outlined is a description of the development, introduction, and evaluation of one important component of the programme, an assignment which involved RTLB staying on a marae and, among other requirements, speaking in te reo Māori. The impact of this activity on RTLB provides a major focus for the paper.

RTLB support regular class teachers to cater for students with mild to moderate learning and behavioural difficulties (Ministry of Education, 1999). The RTLB initiative is seen as a key element of the New Zealand Government's Special Education 2000 policy, which aims to "achieve, over the next decade, a world class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all students" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5).

RTLB are required to participate in a national professional development programme comprising four university papers to be completed part-time over two years. Three New Zealand universities, Auckland, Waikato, and Victoria (Wellington), have collaborated to develop the training programme as part of a contract with the Ministry of Education and the Specialist Education Services (SES). The training programme is delivered throughout New Zealand through a mix of regional block courses (2-3 days per month), on-line communication and practical assignments carried out by RTLB in their local schools and communities. Depending on entry qualifications, the training programme leads to either a graduate or post-graduate Diploma in Special Needs Resource Teaching, which may contribute towards a Masters degree in Education or Special Education.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry of Education has supported the training of RTLB through funding university fees and travel and accommodation costs for RTLB attending training days, and providing computers to support study and to aid communication between RTLB.

In addition, RTLB receive a half day study leave each week as well as release from field duties to attend University.

## **Background**

### ***Towards Inclusion***

The last twenty-five years in New Zealand education have seen a slow but steady shift away from a traditional deficit view of students with special needs that is characterised by a categorical approach to assessment. This has often resulted in restrictive placements and opportunities for 'identified' students. The shift has been towards a more inclusive philosophy and practice, which examines the learning needs of the individual in context and seeks to develop educational practices, designed to not only maintain, but also effectively include students in regular education environments.

The new paradigm has grown out of a developing understanding of learning as an interactive and contextualised process (Moore, Anderson, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown, & Thomson, 1999) and an equity philosophy gaining momentum from human rights legislation and a developing recognition of the rights of cultural minorities. This paradigm aims to address issues of race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, language and disability. An important distinction is made between the term 'mainstreaming', which is primarily about human rights and access to education, and 'inclusion', which is fundamentally about school reform, specifically the development of inclusive teaching practice.

A second major shift has been the move away from central control in the New Zealand education system to decentralisation and devolution of control with the local school as the unit of management.

The development of the guidance and learning units (GLU) in New Zealand was in line with the movement towards assessing behaviour and supporting change in context (Thomas & Glynn, 1976). A forerunner of the RTLB initiative, the GLUs saw the replacement of segregated unit placement for students with significant learning and behavioural difficulties, by an in-class model of support focused upon a student's current performance in the context of the academic programme, teacher behaviour, and the social environment (Thomson, Brown, Jones & Manins, 2000).

While the GLU model was expanded to other parts of the country, a traditional approach to catering for many students through special education facilities remained. Signs of shifts in thinking were becoming more apparent however, and the decision in 1975 of a group of psychologists to no longer use standardised intelligence tests, the key tool for assessing students for placement in segregated facilities, was indicative of the move towards assessment within an inclusive/ecological paradigm. In 1985, the Director of Special Education issued a memorandum to remove the requirement of standardised intelligence test scores for access to special education resources.

During the late 1980s, there was a trend towards the disestablishment of special classes and the development of itinerant resource teachers to support students in regular classes within their neighbourhood schools. Alongside this development was the growth of 'locational mainstreaming', with units supporting students often with severe disabilities located on site at regular schools instead of remaining in special

school placements. The Draft Review of Special Education identified the direction associated with many of these developments by proposing the fundamental principles that special education was to be universal, integrated with other educational programmes, lifelong, unified across educational sectors, and effective and accountable (Thomson, Brown, Jones & Manins, 2000).

A difficulty with the itinerant resource teacher model was the tendency of the teachers to quickly become locked into delivering a withdrawal programme long-term to a small group of students scattered around a cluster of local schools. Given that each student could expect to see the itinerant teacher only around thirty minutes per day at best and that little time was available for programme development work with classroom teachers, the service related more to itinerant teaching than resource teaching and had limited impact on inclusive teaching practices. Within a short time of the development of the itinerant resource teacher model, alternative approaches aimed at a more integrated service and inclusive approach were being proposed (Medcalf & Dwyer, 1989).

The Draft Review of Special Education also paved the way for an initiative closely in line with the RTLB, that of the support teacher and support team. The 1988 closure of Campbell Park School, a residential school for boys with behavioural and learning difficulties, was significant as the subsequent freeing up of resources enabled the development of the support teacher model. The approach involved the allocation of a number of part-time teacher hours in selected schools with identified needs throughout the country to enable the release of experienced teachers to train as support teachers. Support teachers were intended to be just what the name implied; teachers trained to support their teaching colleagues to cater for students experiencing learning and behavioural difficulties. Management committees within schools were established to co-ordinate and assist the support teachers. With school management working alongside other education professionals (such as educational psychologists), the support team was developed. Certainly the support teacher development, beginning in 1988, has strong links to the role of the RTLB and in a number of schools support teachers still operate although many have become known as special education coordinators or SENCOs. Although a national training programme for support teachers was developed and disseminated through Special Education Services (Medcalf & Dwyer, 1994), there were not the numbers of support teachers needed nationally to fulfil the promise of the model.

### ***Self Managing Schools***

With the 1988-1989 review of educational administration in New Zealand came a focus on increasing the capacity of schools to self-manage within a nationally determined framework of curriculum, education and administration guidelines. The *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms were in line with widespread public sector restructuring during the late 80s and 90s, which aimed to introduce a market-oriented approach to social, educational and health services based on principles of competition and consumer choice. Within this environment, many schools flourished with their newfound ability to set priorities, develop policies and systems and have significant control over their resources. Not all schools were winners however, and with the loss of local education boards and the separation of functions previously managed by the central government education department, the coordinated movement towards

inclusion, that appeared to be gaining momentum throughout the 1980s seemed to take a back seat to other educational priorities.

### ***Special Education 2000***

The recommendations of the Draft Review of Special Education (1987) were largely put aside with the emergence of the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms, but the principles re-emerged in 1996 government policy Special Education 2000 (SE2000). SE2000 supported the Draft Review's recommendations of removal of administrative categories of disability, national guidelines for schools to set priorities for the allocation of resources for special needs, a new emphasis upon teacher training to meet special needs in regular schools and classes, support systems for mainstream settings, in-service training for regular class teachers, and specialist training for resource personnel to further establish support for class teachers and students (Thomson, Brown, Jones, & Manins, 2000).

In 1998, 500 special education teacher positions throughout New Zealand, including special, assessment, experienced class teachers and itinerant special needs teachers, were translated into positions for Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB). A further 225 new positions were created to ensure an RTLB: student ratio of 1:750. RTLB were designated to provide support for students experiencing learning and behaviour difficulties, while the policy also provided other services for students with high and very high learning needs and severe behavioural difficulties. The government acknowledged the need for training for RTLB via the Ministry of Education and Specialist Education Services, and the consortium of three universities was contracted to provide a two year training programme at graduate/post graduate level.

The four-paper training programme is designed so that on completion the RTLB will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

1. Ability to work to a high professional ethical standard.
2. Ability to recognise and promote the bi-cultural nature of the New Zealand education system.
3. Ability to work to ensure equitable educational opportunity for all learners.
4. Ability to follow an educational model.
5. Ability to work to a collaborative consultation model.
6. Demonstration of skill as practitioners and as promoters of effective teaching skills.
7. Ability of reflect on professional practice (Thomson, Brown, Jones, & Manins, 2000).

### ***The Role of the RTLB***

RTLB are intended to support schools by working with regular class teachers to ensure success for students experiencing mild to moderate learning and behaviour difficulties. They are working at the interface of the policies of *SE2000* and *Tomorrow's Schools*.

They have also been described as a new class of special educator who are intended to work as itinerant, collaborative consultants assisting teachers to meet children's needs.<sup>3</sup> RTLB work as part of teams that serve a cluster of schools within a

geographical area. Their work is coordinated through small management teams from independent and autonomous schools. Key elements of the RTLB role are:

- Assisting teachers to develop inclusive classroom environments.
- Supporting academic achievement and behavioural change.
- Facilitating collaborative problem-solving.
- Using and supporting culturally appropriate practices.
- Promoting effective parent and community involvement.
- Helping teachers adapt curriculum to meet individual and group needs.
- Collaborating with other professionals.

Five themes in RTLB practice are:

- A focus upon inclusive teaching philosophy which recognises and values diverse strengths irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or disability.
- An ecological-educational approach to assessment and intervention, incorporating data-based decision-making strategies.
- A collaborative consultative model of problem-solving in service delivery.
- Acknowledgment of cultural values and promotion of preferred learning and teaching practices from within a Māori worldview.
- Reflection on and evaluating professional practice.

*Table 1* (following) summarises the previous positions held by RTLB prior to the professional development programme. These data relate to the original group of approximately 730 RTLB whose members came from a variety of teaching backgrounds. Significantly, approximately one third of this group were currently regular classroom teachers, while approximately one third were in positions requiring them to support individual students.

**Table 1: *Previous Positions Held by RTLB***

<b>Position</b>	<b>Per Cent (Rounded)</b>
Class teachers	29
Senior teachers/managers	19
Itinerant special education teachers	14
Unit based special education teachers	15
Specialist teachers	1
Other	24

The current cohort of RTLB comprise 84.6% female, 84.6% European/Pakeha, with an average age of 45 years.<sup>2</sup> Although a significant number of the students referred to RTLB are Māori, only 9.5% of RTLB identify themselves as Māori. Fewer than half the RTLB applied for their positions, with the majority having their positions rolled over.

While most RTLB are highly experienced teachers, with 70% having taught more than ten years, they are generally not highly academically qualified, with fewer than 30% having completed Bachelors level academic qualifications.

### **The Treaty of Waitangi and its implications in a Special Education teacher training programme**

*Indigenous people have the right to all levels and forms of education. They also have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own language* (Coolongatta Statement, 1993)<sup>4</sup> (cited in Glynn, Berryman, Atvars, Harawira, Walker, & Kaiwai, 1997).

The historic signing of the *Treaty of Waitangi* in 1840 heralded the birth of a nation of two people in New Zealand. The Treaty was signed by Lieutenant-Governor Hobson on behalf of Queen Victoria for the British Empire, and also by Māori chiefs, representing their own people and their descendants. The three distinct articles in the Treaty reflected in principle a desire to promote an alliance between the dominant partner, Māori, and the newly arrived British settlers.

Under *article one* of the *Treaty*, Māori ceded governorship or administrative control (*kawanatanga*) to the Crown. In *article two*, the Crown ceded to Māori chiefly control (*tino rangatiratanga*) or self-determination over their lands, forests and fisheries and other treasures or resources (*taonga*). Māori also retained their sovereign rights to define, promote and control those treasures and resources.<sup>4</sup> The third article guarantees Māori all the rights and protection given to English citizens, thereby affording them 'exclusive' membership of the British Empire.

Difficulties in translation and interpretation of *Treaty* words and the speed of land acquisition by new settlers created an environment of confusion, alienation and deprivation for the original landowners, the relationship between both Māori and non-Māori in New Zealand having been characterised by political and social domination by the Pakeha majority rather than by partnership and Māori self-determination.<sup>4</sup> However, Māori have always regarded the Treaty as a charter for power sharing in the decision-making processes of government, for self-determination as an indigenous people and as a guide to intercultural relations in New Zealand (Durie, 1995).

The RTLB Training Programme identifies this shifting of the power base from Māori (pre-Treaty position) to the current situation where Pakeha have become the dominant power. This counter-Treaty position shows Pakeha located at the centre and Māori with other cultural groups remaining at the margins and having to negotiate with Pakeha to access resources. The damaging implications of this for Māori autonomy and self-determination and for partnership in terms of ownership, access and control of educational resources are obvious. An equitable *Treaty* position is one where both Māori and Pakeha are located in the centre circle, and recent migrant and refugee culture groups are located along with Pakeha and need to negotiate with Māori in accessing resources to support their presence in New Zealand.<sup>5</sup>

Countering the negative influences were a range of revitalisation efforts by Māori, including the development of *Kohanga Reo*, *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori immersion primary schools), and more recently *Whare Kura* (Māori immersion secondary schools) and *Whare Wananga* (Māori universities). These grew from frustration and a fear that Māori language, customs and culture were being lost. A number of authorise (see, for example, Hirsh 1990, p. 210; Irwin 1998, p. 217) place this development in

perspective by calling on Government to honour the *Treaty* and build its principles into governance and management policies of all state education institutions.

From the late eighties through to the present time, political pressure to recognise and endorse the legal status of the *Treaty of Waitangi* has been continually applied - more so since the *Tomorrow's Schools* policy which proceeded to decentralise the New Zealand education system and allow more input from parents at the local level. Through this policy, the *Treaty* initially appeared to occupy a very real place in the restructuring of education. However, its influence over time and when it came to enacting policies has arguably been limited. Given the cultural diversity that exists in New Zealand society and in New Zealand classrooms, cultural issues in learning and teaching deserve close consideration. Culturally preferred ways of learning and thinking should not be considered a 'handicap' nor a temporary barrier to learning (Moore, Andersen, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown & Thomson, 1999, p. 37). Moore and his colleagues, and Macfarlane (2000), assume the position that special education needs to take account of Māori preferred ways of learning and of a Māori view of the world. Māori research literature points to initiatives that reflect the low numbers of services that support special education for Māori. Kana and Harawira (1995) attempt to address this issue by advocating the sharing of knowledge and expertise by special education providers who are of diverse cultural background.

Specialist Education Services (SES) in New Zealand, which operated from 1989 – 2002, reflected the dual-partnership promoted in the *Treaty of Waitangi* by adopting a mission statement that drew on an old Māori *whakatauki* (metaphor) attributed to Tawhaio: *There are three strands - Miro Ma, Miro Pango, Miro Whero* (the white, the black and the red thread) *all fitting through the eye of a needle*. *Miro pango* involves Māori professionals working with Māori students and whanau. *Miro whero* involves Māori and non-Māori professionals working together with Māori students and whanau. Finally, *Miro ma* involves non-Māori professionals working with Māori students and whanau. Tawhaio's *whakatauki* is relevant to the work of the RTLB, some of whom are Māori, but many of whom are not.

### **RTLB University Training Programme**

The four papers that comprise the university consortium training embody the principles of the Treaty (*partnership, protection and participation*) by providing an academic programme that encourages RTLB to become more culturally inclusive in the way they work with Māori students and their families. Twenty-five percent of the teaching and assessment of each of the four courses focuses on understanding a Māori worldview, and how to connect this view to RTLB professional practice (see *Appendix 1: Outline of the four University papers included in RTLB training*).

#### ***Noho Marae (A Marae experience as a relevant cultural context)***

One of the bicultural strands is examined here in order to demonstrate how the reality of culture is built into the development of this national special education training initiative. As outlined by Moore et al. (1999), the bicultural strand draws on the following traditional themes:

*Te Reo Māori* (The Māori language)

It is the language that preserves and promotes the existence of cultural and group ethnicity within a contemporary society. *Te reo Māori* (the Māori language) is, therefore, the umbilical cord that ties the group to their traditional customs, stories and cultural and socio-political structure.

*Tikanga* (Cultural way of doing things)

Customs make the connection between the culture and the learning context, providing a new dimension for learning within a traditional cultural paradigm.

*Kaupapa Māori* (The essence of practice that supports Māori pedagogy)

Within the training programme, *kaupapa Māori* provides a new way of addressing issues pertaining to learning and behaviour. It is a powerful tool that can moderate behaviour and improve learning opportunities for all students.

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi)

The basic principles of *Partnership, Protection and Participation* (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) encourage decision-makers to meet *Treaty* obligations at both national and regional levels. However, varying commitments to honouring the *Treaty* have resulted in continual debate by the two *Treaty* partners. Its place within a special education training programme relates to the learning and behaviour context that supports better outcomes for Māori.

The RTLB training programme uses these four traditional themes to position the RTLB teachers in a cultural context that is relatively unknown to many of them. One of the four *Te Ao Māori* assignments that reflects all of these traditional cultural themes is the *Noho Marae* component within *Paper 3*. Here, students are expected to stay on a marae overnight in order to experience an environment that is conducive to the development of a culturally inclusive way of working with Māori. This assignment has four components:

***Participation in a hui***

Engagement in language and cultural learning opportunities throughout a hui, including *pōwhiri* (greeting process), *karakia* (prayer), preparation and serving of food, contributing to the *kaupapa* (main topic) relating to the enhancement of behavioural and learning opportunities for Māori students, and *poroporoaki* (farewell).

***Presentation in Māori***

RTLB participants are asked to present a personal *mihī* (greeting) in which they use the Māori language as much as possible. The presentation should include a *whakataukī* (metaphor) related in some way to education, followed by a brief explanation (in English) of the *whakataukī* and an explanation of what the *whakataukī* means to them personally.

***Presentation in English***

RTLB select one of Tāwhiao's three strands and prepare and present an oral report (maximum 5 minutes), providing an example of effective practice which enhances the learning and behavioural outcomes for Māori students in the classroom or school/community context. Their presentation is expected to

demonstrate a consideration of issues such as means of assessment, Māori-preferred learning and teaching strategies, appropriate consultation and collaboration (e.g. *whanau* and *hui* processes).

***Written notes***

Following the presentation at the *hui*, RTLB are expected to hand in not more than three typed (A4) pages of their notes, including an explanation of their chosen *whakataukī* and an outline of their presentation.

In order to ensure that the task is culturally sound, appropriate assessment strategies had to be developed in relation to the oral context of the marae experience. The Māori caucus teaching team and representatives from the University Consortium met and affirmed an assessment process that reflected both the University's academic standards and the important *tikanga* (cultural customs) of Māori culture. Māori RTLB teaching staff aided by *kaumatua* (male and female elders) were to award a mark using a five-point scale and basing their assessment on the following criteria:

***Te tu o te tangata*** (Delivery of the speech)

Presentation of the speaker in terms of *Humarietanga* (genuineness), *Ngakautanga* (coming from the heart), *Wairuatanga* (spirituality), *Pono* (beliefs), and *Tika* (respect for the exercise).

***Te kiko o te korero*** (Depth of the speech)

Evidence of planning skills, wide reading, relevance to classroom experiences, appropriateness for Māori students.

***Whakamutunga o te korero*** (Concluding the presentation)

Use of Māori language to conclude (which might include acknowledgment of *iwi kainga* (tribal home people)), and personal reflection on what the process has meant for the participant as an individual and as a Resource Teacher.

***Whakakapi*** (Oral evaluation)

*Kaumatua* and Māori staff members give a group and individual evaluation after every ten speakers, reflecting positively on what was said and how it was delivered (through the language) to the listeners within the *marae* (meeting house).

The cultural learning throughout the process requires students to consult collaboratively with Māori people. What help they receive depends on the cultural rapport they are able to develop in a context where the *mana* (importance) of individuals is based on their knowledge of the language, genealogy of the tribal group, age and position within the family structure, a context in which an unassuming school caretaker may be treated as being on the level of a *rangatira* (chief) within and beyond the marae.

Assessment marks reflect a student's position on a continuum of learning within a cultural learning context that treats learning as being relative to one's own development, does not include the concept of pass or fail grades, and does not make comparisons among participants. Knowledge gained through the assessment process

is personal to the learner, providing him or her with an opportunity to improve in the future.

Striving for partnership as a commitment to the *Treaty of Waitangi* is a key aspect of developing and maintaining relationships with Māori community. The choice is not whether schools develop a relationship with Māori communities, but what the quality of the relationship will be (Ministry of Education, 2000). Thus, a bicultural process – a process that involves RTLB in working in a cultural context which most have no control over - enables participants to make a cultural match between their own beliefs and knowledge and that of Māori students. This is important because teachers are often at different levels of awareness and can lack information about Māori education, thus failing to realise that culture counts (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Therefore, it is the cultural dimension of the education process that is prioritised. RTLB work in an environment where schools are encouraged to be more culturally inclusive and must, therefore, be prepared to take a lead in this area.

### **Evaluation of the *Noho Marae* component of the training**

Feedback on the *Noho Marae* process was gathered from 227 RTLB participants in the Hamilton-Tauranga, New Plymouth, Auckland, Northland, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Whakatane, Rotorua and Taupo regions. Data was collected through an evaluation form providing prompts for open feedback as well as a rating scale to determine satisfaction with the process.

Comments relating to how participants felt prior to the exercise indicated a high level of fear and uncertainty, a sense of intimidation and despair, and, in one case, a feeling of being unsafe. The feelings of helplessness that participants reported experiencing, especially while working towards participation in a *noho marae*, often led to anxiety, frustration and anger. However, there were marked differences in both attitude and personal growth in the post-evaluations. Many comments reflected participants' appreciation of being given the opportunity to participate in a process that was warm and understanding, supportive and professionally relevant. The cultural experience was felt to have provided the skills, knowledge and encouragement necessary to enable them to develop their own network of Māori support-people, who could help in providing better learning outcomes for Māori students. In fact 85% of the 227 RTLB responses accorded an 8, 9, 10 & 10+ degree of satisfaction with the whole *noho marae* process (on a 10 point scale, with 1 being the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 being the highest). These data suggest that this experience was highly valued despite the anxieties many RTLB experienced prior to the event.

Problematic issues for the Māori teaching team to consider in further improving the programme were communicated to them by RTLB after the *noho marae*. Some of these issues included:

- The dilemma of cultural *tikanga* (cultural customs) being subjected to a university assessment procedure.
- Acknowledgment of RTLB prior knowledge and their competency in the Māori language.
- Differences in dialectal and marae protocol.
- Special issues for Māori RTLB such as their relationship and support of non-Māori colleagues and the challenge for females being asked to speak on the

marae of another iwi, having not had the opportunity to previously speak on their own marae.

Many of the concerns related to making the match between *te reo me ona tikanga* (language and customs) and the Eurocentric learning environment that is seen as the norm in most school settings. In this context, an important goal of RTLB education must continue to be to introduce education professionals to contexts that allow them to access the type of cultural knowledge to which many Māori students relate. It is these kinds of initiative that assist in addressing the difficulties that inevitably occur when an education system derived from one culture has as its pupils the children of another (Harker & McConnachie, 1985).

### **A reflective perspective on the *Noho Marae* experience**

Metge & Kinloch (1978) found that most people take their culture for granted, assuming that their way is the only way of seeing and interpreting the world. For RTLB, the *Noho Marae* experience proved an effective way of developing an awareness that other people have different ideas based on their own experiences, perceptions, values and beliefs, and that, included in this are different preferences in relation to learning and teaching. The cultural learning gained by RTLB through such a process assists them in the search for some form of accommodation between their own culture and that of schools and students. The child who experiences a close match between its own culture and that of the school will have an increased opportunity to perform well; the more dissimilar the two are, the greater is the potential risk of disadvantage (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1998). The *Noho Marae* experience is seen by the Māori caucus teaching group as addressing some of these issues. Furthermore, it seems likely that non-Māori RTLBs' experience of being in another cultural context (where rules and expectations at variance with their own culture apply), will enhance their understanding of, and empathy for, the needs of Māori students (who may often find themselves in a very similar position), something that is supported by the fact that many non-Māori RTLB reported feeling "out of their comfort zone" during the *Noho Marae* experience. For Māori RTLB, be they fluent in the language and well versed in the culture or not, there are different, but no less challenging issues to face.

The initial goals set by the planning team, including senior lecturers at Waikato University and *kaumatua* (elders), included attempting to address specific issues that Māori students were experiencing with learning and behaviour, at the same time as seeking to protect the integrity, the distinctiveness and the quality of Māori knowledge and preferred pedagogy. These goals are supported by a great deal of literature which indicates that valuing a child's language and culture are critical to the child's educational and psychological well-being (see, for example, Bishop 1995; Bishop & Glynn 1999; Durie 1994; Fraser & Moltzen, 1995; Gerzon, 1992; Glynn & Bishop, 1995; Kana & Harawira, 1995; Macfarlane, 1997; Metge, 1990).

The process undergone by RTLB highlighted an array of cultural strategies that would benefit not just the RTLB participants but Māori students and their families as well. Linking previous cultural learning by each RTLB, collaborative consultation with Māori at the *whanau* (family) and *iwi* (tribal) level, marae protocol that places people at the centre of the process and examination of cultural practice are all supportive of a

holistic and inclusive approach to understanding and addressing the complexities of learning and behaviour.

### Conclusion

This paper has provided an outline of the bicultural component of the national professional development programme for Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), particular emphasis having been placed on the *Noho Marae* experience which is seen as a key element of the programme. One challenge for RTLBs is transferring their cultural learning from the context of the marae to the classroom and school environment where the values of *manaaki* (caring for each other), *aroha* (love and respect) and *awhina* (helping) need to be at the centre of the support provided for students who are experiencing learning and behaviour difficulties. In this context, the role of the *Noho Marae* experience in underpinning the development of supportive, equitable and collaborative relationships between RTLB and their communities cannot be overstated.

### Endnotes

1. This article is based on a paper presented at the Australian Association of Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Sydney, December 2000.
2. This was discussed in a paper by Walker, Thomson, Jones, Brown, Moore and Macfarlane - which was presented at an NZSEA conference in Christchurch in 2000.
3. This description was included in a paper by Davis and Pragnell - Special Education 2000: A national framework - which was presented at the Special Education 2000 Conference in Auckland in 1999.
4. Appears in a paper by Glynn, Atvars, Berryman, Harawira, Tari, and Walker - Research, training and indigenous rights to self-determination: Challenges arising from a New Zealand bicultural journey - which was presented at the International School of Psychology XXth Colloquium in Melbourne in 1997.
5. Discussed in a paper by Moore, Anderson, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown, Thomson and Ysseldyke - Resource teachers learning and behaviour: An ecological approach to special education - presented at the Annual Conference of the Association of Special Education in Sydney in 1999.

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*Appendix 1: Outline of the four University papers included in RTLB training*

**Paper 1 (*Te Kuhuna*)**

This paper examines key concepts and theoretical issues that govern interaction of individuals and small groups of students and the context in which they experience learning and behavioural difficulties. This includes consultation, effective assessment, and intervention strategies that support effective positive change. The *Te Ao Māori* section of this course aims to increase students' knowledge and understanding of the Māori holistic worldview, one that links the past and present, the sacred and secular, the physical and spiritual. RTLB are also introduced to an analysis of the *Treaty of Waitangi* in terms of responsibilities of educational professionals, particularly those who are non-Māori.

**Paper 2 (*Te Putanga*)**

Classroom contexts and their impact upon the learning and behaviour of students are analysed in this paper. Emphasis is placed on assisting teachers to develop inclusive classroom environments that enhance academic and social behaviour and strategies for adapting instruction in the least intrusive way. The *Te Ao Māori* component in this course aims to broaden and deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the Māori world. Three main themes are explored:

- Growing up Māori (focuses on the introduction of social, economic and cultural factors in contemporary whanau (family) and iwi (tribal) life);
- The connections between Māori language and Māori cultural values;
- Specific examples of culturally appropriate assessment strategies, where language and culture determines both the process and the learning outcome and introduces intervention programmes aimed at improving the achievement of Māori students.

**Paper 3 (*Te Raranga*)**

This paper analyses school and community contexts and their impact on student learning and behaviour. Emphasis is placed on consulting and collaborating with school and community members to put in place effective strategies and programmes that will enhance outcomes for students. The importance of *whanaungatanga* (relationships) for RTLBs' understanding of the need for *whanau* support systems in schools and for getting assistance in locating appropriate Māori people to approach when trying to enhance learning for Māori students is also emphasised. These are incorporated into a practical exercise requiring RTLB to work within an authentic Māori cultural context, the Marae.

**Paper 4 (*Te Huarahi*)**

A supervised practicum incorporating a portfolio of professional practice that demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes for this whole course is the focus for the last paper. The *Te Ao Māori* focus here is based around the portfolio model and attempts to draw together the bicultural learning from all papers covered in the two years of training.